

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

Strategies for Disorder Prevention and Intervention



MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS WITH A PERINATAL ONSET

- Mood and trauma-based disorders which affect the mother, affect

Child/ren

Partner

Family

Community

MANIFESTATIONS

■ PERINTAL ONSET MOOD DISORDERS

- “Baby blues”
- Depression
- Anxiety
 - Generalized Anxiety
 - Obsessive/Compulsive
- Bipolar
- Psychosis

■ PERINATAL ONSET TRAUMA-BASED DISORDERS

- Adjustment disorder
- Post-traumatic stress
 - Past
 - Present
- Post-trauma syndrome

INCIDENCE

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- Approx. 10-20% of women will experience a diagnosed mood disorder in the postpartum period – birth to 12 months postpartum (AHRQ, US Dept HHS, Pub 05-E006-2, Feb 05)
- Of those, approx. 50% will manifest diagnosable symptoms in the prenatal period
- Approximately 25-30% or more of women experience sexual abuse before the age of 18. Only ½ or less of these incidents are ever reported
- A history of sexual abuse or unexpected birth outcomes raises the incidence of post-traumatic stress in women following childbirth

Disorders may be experienced by:

Mother

Partner

Family members

Care providers

Witnesses

and perhaps infant/s

MULTI-FACTORAL RISK ASSESSMENT

■ Family factors

- Social support
- Recent events
- Couple relationship

■ Maternal factors

- Prenatal care/education
- Feelings about pregnancy
- Childhood history
- Self-esteem/identity
- Past/Present emotional health

■ Substance use

- Alcohol
- Non-prescription drugs
- Self / partner

■ Family violence

- Witnessed
- Current / past partner
- History of child abuse
- Family discipline

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

- Antenatal Psychosocial Health Assessment Inventory ("ALPHA")
(CMAJ 1998:159(6))
- Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale ("EDPS")
(Br J Psychiatry 1987 Jun;150:782-6)
- Postpartum Depression Screening Scale ("PDSS")
(MCN Am J Matern Child Nurs. 2004 May-Jun;29(3):180-5)

UTILIZING DATA

■ CARE PROVIDER FOLLOW-UP

- Supportive counseling by care provider
- ↑ prenatal/postpartum appointments
- ↑ well baby visits
- Home care

■ COMMUNITY RESOURCE REFERRALS

- Psychiatrist
- Psychotherapy
- Addiction treatment
- Public health services
- Educational resources

"Lillian"

- 34 y/o Caucasian female
- 1st baby – a boy
- Unexpected cesarean section delivery
- HMO diagnosed with "generalized anxiety disorder" and "depression with a postpartum onset"
- Red flags: insomnia, history of mood d/o, poor social support, disrupted identity, denied then remembered childhood sexual abuse (neighbor), subsequent partner relationship problems
- HMO treatment: prescription "Zoloft"
- Self-referred to mothers' group
- Self-referred for individual therapy
 - Insomnia treatment
 - Anxiety management
 - Birth-trauma treatment
 - Childhood abuse treatment
 - Relationship concerns
- Referred for couple therapy

"Tammy"

- 28 y/o Vietnamese female
- 3rd baby – a girl
- 2 y/o girl, and 5 y/o girl
- "Uneventful" pregnancy and birth
- No primary care diagnosis – fear of hospitalization
- Receiving daily care from chiropractor doing home visits
- Red flags: social isolation, couple relationship problems, unplanned pregnancy, late prenatal care, poor self-esteem, early childhood witnessed violence
- Referred by hospital-based Lactation Consultant
- Primary symptom: agoraphobia
- Other symptoms of anxiety:
 - Visualized fears
 - Excessive shame
 - Self-imposed isolation
- Cultural concerns
 - "Letting down" husband, family, doctors/care providers, self
- Individual therapy in home then office
- On-line mothers' group, plans to join community-based group

"Stephanie"

- 38 y/o Latina female
- 1st birth – a boy
- History of infertility treatment
 - Multiple miscarriages
- History of planned abortion (17 y/o)
- Veteran of "Desert Storm"
- History of childhood abuse (father/brother)
- Referred by VA
- Several prescription medications <pregn.,
- "Prozac" during pregnancy and b/f
- Refused mothers' gp
- Individual therapy, including
 - EMDR
 - Hypnosis
 - Attachment
 - Parent Education

Recommendations

- Provider training
 - MDs and staff
 - Hospital staff
 - Public health staff
 - Community
- Provider access to assessment inventories
- Screening in prenatal period and postpartum period as standard of care
- Referral guides by location made available to providers/parents
 - Trained providers
 - Public health resources
 - Community-based resources
 - Mothers' groups
 - Fathers' groups
- Advocacy